

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 AMMAN 07404 180705Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 054281 /15

R 180616Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9914
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 7404

EXDIS

CAIRO FOR SOLARZ

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, JO,SY, US
SUBJECT: CODEL SOLARZ: SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

1. DURING COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS WITH KING HUSSEIN DEC. 16 (SEPTTEL),
CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ RAISED QUESTION OF SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY,
WHOSE MEMBERS SYRIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PERMIT TO LEAVE SYRIA.

2. SOLARZ INDICATED HE HAD RAISED GENERAL SUBJECT WITH KING
LAST YEAR. SOLARZ SAID THAT HE HAS A LARGE NUMBER OF CONSITUENTS
OF SYRIAN JEWISH ORIGIN IN HIS CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT AND
THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN SEEING IF SOMETHING CAN
BE DONE TO INDUCE THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT TO RELAX ITS POLICY
OF NOT ALLOWING ANY OF THE 4,500 SYRIAN JEWS TO
LEAVE SYRIA.

3. SOLARZ SAID HE HAS ONE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL TO PUT FORWARD
TO THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT AND HE WONDERS IF KING HUSSEIN COULD
ALSO USE HIS "GOOD OFFICES" TO MENTION THIS PROPOSAL TO SYRIAN
PRESIDENT ASAD. SOLARZ SAID THERE ARE FOUR HUNDRED YOUNG
SYRIAN JEWISH WOMEN OF OR APPROACHING MARRIAGE AGE WHO ARE UNABLE
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TO FIND HUSBANDS IN SYRIA; (FYI: SOLARZ INDICATED TO CHARGE
FOLLOWING INTERVIEW WITH KING THAT MAJOR REASON FOR THIS
SITUATION IS THAT MANY MARRIAGEABLE SYRIAN JEWISH MALES HAVE
EITHER SURREPTITIOUSLY LEFT SYRIA OVER PAST FEW YEARS OR ARE
NOT MARRYING BECAUSE OF HOPES THES MAY BE ABLE TO DEPART IN
FUTURE. END FYI)

4. SOLARZ SAID THIS SITUATION IS A SOURCE OF CONCERN BECAUSE IT IS CUSTOMARY FOR JEWISH WOMEN IN SYRIA TO MARRY BY AGE 18 OR 19, AND NON-MARRIAGE IS FROWNED UPON IN THAT CULTURE. SOLARZ CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE BELIEVES ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE TO SPONSOR THESE GIRLS AS STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES IF SYRIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD PERMIT THEIR DEPARTURE. SOLARZ SAID HE WILL ALSO BE TAKING UP ISSUE DIRECTLY WITH SYRIAN GOVERNMENT DURING HIS VISIT TO DAMASCUS LATER THIS MONTH. IN CONCLUSION, HE SAID HE THOUGHT ANY INDICATION OF SYRIAN FLEXIBILITY ON THIS ISSUE WOULD ALSO HAVE SIGNIFICANT SYMBOLIC EFFECT AS A GOOD WILL GESTURE BY SYRIA IN BROADER TERMS OF ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS.

5. KING HUSSEIN RESPONDED IMMEDIATELY TO PRESENTATION BY SAYING HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD WITH PRESIDENT ASAD ON THIS ISSUE. KING SAID HIS ONLY STIPULATIONS (TO WHICH SOLARZ AGREED) WERE: 1) THAT THE KING'S INTERCESSION NOT BE PUBLICIZED, AND 2) THAT, IF THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT DID PERMIT THE RELEASE, THE SYRIAN ACTION NOT BE TENDENTIOUSLY PLAYED AS "AN EXPULSION" OF SYRIA JEWS. KING SAID HE WOULD RAISE SUBJECT WITH ASAD AND COMMUNICATE ANY INFORMATION ON SUBJECT TO CONGRESSMAN THROUGH EMBASSY.

6. THIS MESSAGE NOT SEEN BY CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ AND SUBJECT TO HIS REVIEW.
SUDDARTH

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